R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 018 841 CG 001 870

FUNCTIONS OF VISITING TEACHERS IN MICHIGAN. SUMMARY OF PRELIMINARY FINDINGS.

MICHIGAN UNIV., ANN ARBOR, MIDWEST RESEARCH CTR.

EDRS PRICE MF-~~$0.25~~ $0.25 HC-$1.60 ~~33P.~~ 53P.

DESCRIPTORS- *QUESTIONNAIRES, STUDENT PERSONNEL SERVICES, *SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS, *PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, *STAFF ROLE,

THE TASKS PERFORMED BY VISITING TEACHERS AS IDENTIFIED BY VISITING TEACHERS, THE ACTUAL TASK PERFORMANCE OF VISITING TEACHERS AS VIEWED BY PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS AND SCHOOL DIAGNOSTICIANS, AND THE TASKS THAT VISITING TEACHERS SHOULD PERFORM ACCORDING TO SCHOOL PERSONNEL WERE STUDIED. DATA WAS OBTAINED THROUGH QUESTIONNAIRES. THE FIRST SECTION INCLUDED QUESTIONS ON THE VISITING TEACHERS' BACKGROUNDS AND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL BUILDINGS IN WHICH THEY WORKED. THIS SECTION, WHICH ONLY VISITING TEACHERS RESPONDED TO, CONCERNED THE FUNCTIONS PERFORMED BY THE VISITING TEACHER AND THE STAFF'S PERCEPTION OF THE VISITING TEACHER. THE SECOND PART CONSISTED OF COMPARISONS OF THE VISITING TEACHERS'S ROLE AS VIEWED BY VISITING TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, SCHOOL DIAGNOSTICIANS AND TEACHERS. SUBJECTIVE OPINIONS BY THE TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS IN RESPONSE TO THREE ESSAY QUESTIONS WERE INCLUDED IN THE THIRD PART, WHILE THE FINAL SECTION PRESENTED SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROGRAM. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA SHOWED THAT THE SCHOOL PERSONNEL DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF THE VISITING TEACHER NOR WAS THERE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PERSONNEL AND THE VISITING TEACHER ON WHICH PROBLEMS SHOULD BE REFERRED TO THE VISITING TEACHER AS THE FIRST STEP AND WHAT FUNCTIONS SHOULD MAKE UP THE VISITING TEACHER'S ROLE. (CG)

ED018841

MIDWEST REGIONAL CENTER FOR PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES

Visiting Teacher Project

Summary of Preliminary Findings

Functions of Visiting Teachers in Michigan

A study was conducted under the auspices of MRCPPS in 1965 to determine: 1) the tasks performed by visiting teachers as identified by visiting teachers, and

2) the actual task performance of visiting teachers as viewed by a random sample of school diagnosticians, principals, and classroom teachers, and what these personnel felt the visiting teacher's function should be.

Questionnaires were sent to 387 certified and functioning visiting teachers, and to a random sample of staff persons in school systems served by visiting teachers. The percentage of visiting teacher returns was 68%, while 100% of the principals, 92% of the teachers, and 95% of the school diagnosticians replied.

The visiting teacher questionnaire consisted of 200 questions, most of which were answered by selecting from nine possible responses. These responses have been collapsed into fewer categories in many tables to provide more meaningful data.

From the original 200 questions, sixty were also sent to staff members in a random sample of schools which had visiting teacher service.

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From the original 200 questions, sixty were also sent to staff members where responding visiting teachers worked.

The first section of the draft deals with questions asked of visiting teachers only and consists of two parts.

The first part covers the visiting teacher background information, including educational background, employment history and general program information. Many of these questions are broken down to show differences in responses given by visiting teachers with little, moderate or high experience as functioning visiting teachers. For example the tables covering sex and age are constructed in this way:

VISITING TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

	Total Years as VT		
	0 - 3	4 - 10	11 or more
	38 %	53 %	15 %

SEX	Total	Years of experience as VT: 0 - 3	4 - 10	11 or more
Male	22 %	26 %	24 %	11 %
Female	76	74	76	89
AGE				
Under 30	5	14	2	-
30 - 40	30	46	29	-
40 - 50	26	26	26	28
50 - 60	33	14	39	50
over 60	4	-	4	22

The second part summarizes the information given by visiting teachers on three buildings served by them. The information in this section includes characteristics of the school building and its operation, the staff's perceptions of the visiting teacher, the functions performed by the visiting teacher and time allocations of these functions.

The second section consists of comparisons of the visiting teacher's role as viewed by visiting teachers, principals, school diagnosticians and teachers. The first part of this section contains questions regarding sixty activities of the visiting teacher according to the views of these various staff members and their perceptions on what these activities <u>should</u> be in the ideal situation. The questions on the present performance of the visiting teacher's functions are subdivided into four categories as follows:

1. Frequency and percent of DO responses to social work functions relating to the reason for referral to the VT as a first step, as seen by the visiting teacher.

2. Frequency and percent of DO responses relating to the VT attempting to carry out specific functions.

3. Frequency and percent of DO responses relating to the VT carrying out specific functions.

4. Frequency and percent of DO responses relating to the VT participating in specific activities.

A fifth question indicates what the respondents feel the primary responsibilities of the VT <u>should</u> be and is collapsed with questions 2 and 3 to show the differences between how respondents view what the VT does and whay they feel he should do.

There are questions covering IQ of pupils served, the visiting teachers' image with the other staff members, the visiting teachers' autonomy in the school, and the support given to the visiting teacher by other staff members. Each of these questions were responded to by visiting teachers, principals, school diagnosticians and teachers.

The third section was designed to elicit subjective opinions from visiting teachers, principals, school diagnosticians and teachers on the visiting teacher role. Three essay questions were stated as follows:

1. What do you feel is the most difficult and least satisfying aspect of VT work?

2. What innovations do you feel the VT service in your building should introduce?

3. What is the major reason that you feel these innovations are necessary?

The responses to these essay questions were studied and analyzed to extract recurring points and major trends relating to the respondents' perceptions of the visiting teacher and his work by school personnel.

We can summarize the background data collected in the study in the form of a visiting teacher profile as follows:

A woman who has been a visiting teacher for about 5 years and is between the ages of 50 and 60. She has been in the same school district throughout her visiting teacher career and she has full approval. She was previously a classroom teacher and has had 3 previous jobs. Her undergraduate major was Education and she went to a small college in the Midwest to obtain this degree. She received her Masters in Education and has one additional year in Social Work. She received her graduate work at the University of Michigan and her field work placement was at a Family Service Agency.

A profile of what the visiting teacher is becoming (from the characteristics of the visiting teacher with little experience) shows the following:

A woman who has between 0 and 3 years service and is between 30 and 40 years of age. She has been in the same school district throughout her visiting teacher career and she has full approval. She has prior experience as a classroom teacher and this is her 3rd job. Her undergraduate major was in Education and she attended a small midwestern college. She has a Masters in Education and one additional year in the School of Social Work. She received her graduate training at Wayne State University and did her field work placement in a school setting.

The first section, pages 6 to 11, includes only visiting teacher background with no information on other respondents. Many questions are broken down by years of experience as a visiting teacher.

All figures are given in percentages unless otherwise noted. Where percentages of responses do not total 100%, this may be due to failure of some respondents to respond to that item, variances in processing the data, or the effect of rounding figures.

NOTE: Where " - " is used, this mean less than 1%.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

	Years of experience as a VT		
	0 - 3	4 - 10	11 or more
UNDERGRADUATE MAJOR**			
Education	59 %	56 %	72 % *
Sociology	19	26	19
Psychology	9	10	11
English	13	25	11
Social Science	25	26	11
Natural Science	12	4	6
Mathematics	4	4	6
Other	15	13	17
UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION **			
Michigan State University	12	8	6
University of Michigan	13	10	28
Wayne University	22	25	22
Other Big Ten	5	5	-
Midwestern	42	44	42
Eastern	3	5	11
Southern	9	6	3
Western	1	5	-
Other	15	12	19
GRADUATE EDUCATION **			
M.A. in Education	51	57	61
M.S.W.	32	30	25
1 year School of Education	10	12	6
1 year School of Social Work	20	23	25
Less than 1 year	1	2	-
Other	12	17	19
GRADUATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION **			
Michigan State University	35	22	14
University of Michigan	34	50	64
Wayne University	40	40	42
Other Big Ten	4	1	6
Midwestern	17	11	6
Eastern	1	10	22
Southern	4	2	-
Western	1	2	-
Other	3	5	3

* NOTE: It is important that data on pages 6 and 7 be interpreted correctly. As an example, this figure means that 72% of the visiting teachers with 11 or more years of experience have received an undergraduate major in Education.

** NOTE: More than one response was possible in these categories.

VISITING TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

	Years of experience as VT		
	0 - 3	4 - 10	11 or more
FIELD WORK PLACEMENTS **			
Child Guidance Clinics	14 %	20 %	44 %
Mental Hospitals	13	5	-
Family Service	29	35	17
Schools	33	29	25
Correctional Settings	-	1	3
Community Centers	4	4	-
YMCA- YWCA	3	1	6
Child Welfare	9	18	3
Other	17	14	22
PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**			
Classroom teacher	75	80	81
Counselor	8	12	17
Administrator	9	9	22
Other special service role	5	11	3
Clinical experience	16	16	19
Correctional experience	8	5	8
Other professional experience	31	40	39
Recreational	16	17	17
Other	17	14	17
NUMBER OF DIFFERENT JOBS PRIOR TO BECOMING VT			
1 job held	49	34	29
2	30	19	29
3	13	29	22
4	5	6	14
5	2	1	3
6	1	1	3
YEARS AS VT IN THIS DISTRICT	46	39	10

VT APPROVAL

Full	Temporary
86 %	13 %

** More than one response in possible in these categories.

VISITING TEACHER SERVICE IN DISTRICT

Pupil Membership in District

less than 3,000	3,000 - 12,000	over 12,000
3 %	42 %	49 %

Highest Grade in District

12	lower than 12
97 %	0 %

Lowest Grade in District

Kindergarten	1 or over
98 %	0 %

Number of VT's in District

less than 3	4 - 7	8 or more
50 %	26 %	23 %

Initiation of VT Program

Prior to 1945	1946 - 1957	Since 1958
32 %	30 %	31 %

Buildings Served on Regular Basis

1 - 2	3 - 4	5 or more
2 %	41 %	56 %

Time in Each Building

½ day or less	1 day	1½ - 3 days	full time
43 %	41 %	8 %	-

Time on Records, Planning and Preparation

1/4 - 1/2 day	3/4 - 1 day	more than 1 day
50 %	43 %	4 %

Page 8 provides a picture of the school districts served by the VTs responding to the questionnaire. About half the districts had more than 12,000 students, and all the districts were comprised of grades K through 12. Approximately equal numbers of VT programs were initiated before 1945, between 1945 and 1957, and since 1958.

Approximately 50% of the school districts had fewer than three VTs who covered 5 or more schools on a regular basis. This points to a pattern of services which is also reflected in the fact that almost half the schools had a VT in the building for less than one full day per week. There were no reports of schools served by a full time VT. The VT's service to pupils or staff was further reduced by the demands of record-keeping, planning and preparation, with 43% of the VTs spending about one day a week on these tasks.

Page 9 depicts the typical school served by the VTs participating in the survey. About three-quarters of the schools served were at the elementary level and had 300 to 1,000 pupils. Teacher-pupil ratios were generally about 1-15 to 1-30 and virtually none of the schools were on half-day sessions. About one-half of the schools were suburban, but very few actually served farm areas. Approximately 60% of the schools served families in the blue-collar socio-economic level.

INFORMATION ON THREE BUILDINGS SERVED

Size

less than 300	300 - 1,000	over 1,000
13 %	73 %	10 %

Level

Elementary	Junior High and Intermediate	Senior High	Other
72 %	6 %	4 %	12 %

Teacher-Pupil Ratio

Between 1-15 and 1-30	Between 1-31 and 1-40	Over 1-40
58 %	39 %	-

Use of Half-Day Sessions

Yes	No
3 %	96 %

Residential Area

Rural and small town	Suburban	Urban
16 %	47 %	30 %

Socio-Economic Level

Farm	Lower Blue Collar	Upper Blue Collar	Lower White Collar	Upper White Collar
4 %	34 %	24 %	16 %	14 %

INFORMATION ON REFERRALS

(received by spring vacation of 1964 - 65 school year)

1. 79% of the VTs received less that 3 referrals from principals.

2. No VT received more than 15 referrals directly from principals.

3. 83% of the VTs received less than 15 referrals from teachers which were processed by principals.

4. 10% of the VTs received more than 15 referrals from teachers through principals.

5. 78% of the VTs received less than 3 referrals from school personnel other than teachers and principals.

6. 82% of the VTs received less than 3 referrals from sources other than school staff.

7. 57% of the VTs made less than 3 referrals to outside agencies and 37% made between 4 and 15 such referrals.

INFORMATION REGARDING WAITING LIST

Presence of Waiting List

Yes	No
49%	48%

Referrals Refused

None	1 or more
57%	40%

	Number of Children		
	None	1 - 4	over 4
Number of children on waiting list	48 %	34 %	14 %
Number of referrals not served	48 %	38 %	13 %

TIME ALLOCATIONS

For the following two categories, VTs were asked to identify a typical week in February as representative of their activities.

	less than 2 hours	2 - 8	over 8
Hours in building	4 %	75 %	17 %
Hours in direct service to pupils	15	77	4
Consultation with all staff members re: pupil on caseload	75	24	-
Consultation regarding pupil not on caseload	94	5	-
Contact with Non-School Personnel	80	18	-
Planning and preparation	88	9	-

CONTACTS WITH TEACHERS

How many actual contacts a week on a scheduled bases do you have with teachers to discuss pupils on your active caseload?

No. of contacts	% responding
1 or less	35.%
2 to 6	60
7 to 13	5
over 13	-

How many actual non-scheduled contacts a week do you have with teachers to discuss "problem students" in general (in lounge, cafeteria, halls, etc.)?

No. of contacts	% responding
1 or less	13 %
2 to 6	65
7 to 13	19
over 13	3

VTs ACTIVITIES IN THE SCHOOL (so far in year)

	Number of meetings attended		
	less than 1/5	1/4 to 1/2	more than 1/2
% of staff meetings attended	89 %	7 %	1 %
Percentage of PTA meetings attended	90	5	1
Meetings on curriculum or school operating procedures attended	91	5	2

The first section, pages 6 to 13c, includes only visiting teacher background with no information on other respondents. Many questions are broken down by years of experience as a visiting teacher.

All figures are given in percentages unless otherwise noted. Where percentages of responses do not total 100%, this may be due to failure of some respondents to respond to that item, variances in processing the data, or the effect of rounding figures.

NOTE: Where " - " is used, this means less than 1%.

VT'S IMAGE IN THE SCHOOL

	Visiting Teacher	Principal	School Diagnostician	Teacher
Autonomy of VT in his activities in the building				
High	88 %	86 %	93 %	88 %
Low	11	14	7	6
Support from Majority of Teachers				
High	79	77	47	76
Low	20	23	53	24
Teacher's Understanding of VT Program				
High	67	73	33	47
Low	32	27	67	53
Difficulty in Achieving Acceptance of VT as Staff Member				
High	4	5	13	12
Medium	20	22	47	23
Low	75	73	40	65
Support from Principal*				
High	79			
Medium	13			
Low	4			
Principal's Understanding of VT Program*				
High	74			
Medium	19			
Low	4			

*Only VTs were asked to respond to these items.

IMAGE OF VT SERVICE: All personnel were asked to identify their view regarding visiting teacher activity as it related to children's IQ's.

A. Which of the categories below best pictures the level of IQ of all children referred to VT this year.

	Visiting Teacher	Principal	School Diagnostician	Teacher
None above 100 IQ	1 %	5 %	-	12 %
5 to 10% above 100	16	27	-	41
11 to 20% above 100	12	14	7	6
21 to 30% above 100	6	5	7	-
31 to 40% above 100	10	5	20	-
41 to 50% above 100	14	9	20	6
51 to 60% above 100	9	-	26	12
61 to 70% above 100	13	18	-	-
More than 70% above 100	13	14	20	12

B. Which of the following categories below describe how you feel visiting teachers in your school district are viewed by teachers or administrators? (Fill in as many as apply.)

(The following figures represent NUMBERS of responses, with percentages of persons making any single response in parantheses.)

1. To permissive	31 (12 %)	0 (- %)	2 (9 %)	3 (12 %)
2. An itinerant worker moving from building to building	117. (44)	11 (44)	10 (43)	10 (42)
3. Spends too much time on recording and preparation	8 (3)	5 (20)	1 (4)	1 (4)
4. An intruder in educational institutions	14 (5)	1 (4)	0 (-)	0 (-)
5. Always on the side of the pupil	29 (11)	3 (12)	5 (22)	1 (4)
6. A secondary service within the school system	141 (54)	8 (32)	1 (30)	5 (21)
7. Unable to understand teacher's classroom management problems	18 (7)	3 (12)	3 (13)	3 (12)
8. Should get children to conform to the organizational requirements of the school	103 (39)	2 (8)	3 (13)	5 (21)
9. Other	65 (25)	5 (20)	4 (17)	5 (21)

Pages 10 and 11 provide a picture of the referral systems employed by VTs and their use of time in a particular building. We can summarize the referral emphasis by stating that most referrals to the VT were made by teachers, since less than three referrals had been made by principals, other school personnel, or outside sources by April in about 80%of the schools.

Less than half of the VTs reported that they had to refuse service to any pupils referred to them and only one-half maintained a waiting list. Even where there was a waiting list, it rarely consisted of more than four children. These figures did not validate the claim that VTs are unable to provide service to all the children who need it. There are two vital implications from this information. First, VTs are communicating through formal and informal means the concept of high pressure to meet service needs identified early in the year. Secondly, VTs must structure their referral procedures so that their waiting lists provide accurate information about needs in the school which are unmet. Without this, there is no way to answer such questions as, "How great is the need for visiting teacher services? Where is the need greatest - regarding geographical locations, levels (elementary or secondary) atypical school populations such as inner city schools, etc."

Three-quarters of the responding VTs spent two to eight hours each week working in one building, with only 7% in one building more than 8 hours a week. Most of this time in the building was spent in direct service to pupils or to the teachers of active cases, since extremely few VTs devoted more than 2 hours a week in consultation regarding pupils not on their caseload. Very few VTs had more than 6 contacts per week with teachers, but in those cases where there were more than 6 teacher-VT contacts, they were more often unscheduled and pertaining to problem children in general, rather than to a particular pupil on the VT's caseload. This data could point to a preference by VTs to meet with teachers informally rather than scheduling appointments. Another possible con-

clusion is that teachers prefer the informal unscheduled contact. This approach may actually be carried out more often because it is more efficient. What is actually accomplished and how goals are reached are two areas for further exploration.

The two questions regarding the VT's image in the school indicate a high degree of agreement among the respondents (VTs, teachers, principals, and school diagnosticians)that the VT enjoyed a great deal of autonomy. There were indications that although the VTs received support from teachers, the teacher's understanding of the VT's work was not as great as the support they gave him. In fact, less than half the teachers felt they had a good understanding of the VT program in their school. The VTs felt there was a high level of understanding by teachers. This discrepancy may indicate a real lack of on-going communication between teachers and VTs about the VT program. Although the sample of teachers was small, principals selected these teachers because they were experienced and knowledgeable about the VT program, in the principal's opinion.

The school diagnostician differed from the other respondents regarding teachers' understanding and support of the VT program. About two-thirds of them indicated that teachers did not understand the VT program, and more than half felt that teachers' support of the VT was low. They saw the VT's position in the school very differently from the other staff members. Compared to the other respondents, relatively few school diagnosticians felt that the VT was easily accepted as a staff member. Since acceptance is a difficult work to interpret, some of the disagreement here may be based on the way the word is interpreted. There should be further study on the <u>acceptance</u> to perform what <u>acts</u>.

The responses on the service focus in relation to the IQ scores of pupils, indicated that approximately half of the principals felt that up to 30% of the pupils served had IQs above 100. This finding would seem to imply that the principal perceived the focus of service was to low ability pupils. However, 32% of the principals viewed the service as directed toward more pupils with IQs above 100. This emphasis of service to extremes (low or high ability) was repeated by teachers, but with greater emphasis on the children with low ability. The diagnosticians perceived that the majority of service was focused upon pupils in the middle range of ability.

These variations are not inconsistent with the findings from the VT study, since the VTs identified services to the entire range of ability. It would be interesting to know whether these distributions would coincide with the preferences of each role occupant regarding service focus. VTs could learn a great deal about staff expectations through a determination of where service <u>should</u> be focused, as seen by the teachers, the principal, and the diagnostician.

Question B on page 13, attempted to determine whether VTs were actually categorized or labeled by school staff or by themselves. The categories were generally negative, but were drawn from verbal comments made by staff members or by VTs themselves. The responses seemed to eliminate some of the "old wives tales" surrounding image. For example, question 1 indicates that 12% of the VTs felt that they were viewed by other staff members as too permissive, while there was very little supporting evidence. that staff actually viewed them that way.

Secondly, question 8 revealed that principals and teachers did not expect the organizational conformity that 39% of the VTs felt they expected. In addition, teachers and principals did not see the VT on the side of the pupil, or unable to understand teachers' classroom management problems.

On the other hand, there was considerable agreement between all respondents (VTs included) on two categories:

No. 2. An itinerant worker moving from building to building.

No. 6. A secondary service within the school system.

These labels are less nagative than they are realistic, for the visiting teacher is pictured early in this survey as a traveler who provides non-educational services in several buildings.

If we interpreted primary services to mean those related to the primary goal of the organization (instruction), the visiting teacher is not crucial to the maintenance of the organization, since replacement was not required in cases of absence.

The following section, pages 14 to 17, show comparisons of responses given by the following: Visiting Teacher

Principal

School Diagnostician

Teacher

Total number of VTs	responding	is		243
"	"	Ps	"	25
"	"	SDs	"	23
"	"	Ts	"	24

PERCENT OF "DO" RESPONSES TO SOCIAL WORK FUNCTIONS
RELATING TO REFERRAL TO VT AS A FIRST STEP

		PERCENT RESPONSES			
		VT	T	P	SP
1	A child is aggressive to his peers, defiant of the teacher, and antagonistic to adults generally.	85	47	82	67
2	A child is often absent from school without a sufficient reason.	25	12	5	7
3	A child appears depressed, withdrawn, anxious and fearful.	73	71	68	73
4	A child sees, hears and talks to persons and objects which are not real.	86	71	77	87
5	A child steals and/or destroys school property.	68	41	32	53
6	A child fails to perform academically up to his known capacity.	58	35	23	7
7	A child appears to be intellectually dull.	12	6	9	-
8	A generally well-behaved child has a series of severe temper tantrums.	51	3[illegible]	64	27
9	A child is habitually, dirty, unkempt and poorly dressed.	21	24	14	13
10	A child mispronounces ordinary words and sounds.	-	-	-	-
11	A child is very poorly co-ordinated for his age.	8	-	-	-
12	A child cannot keep up with classmates in reading.	18	-	5	-
13	A child stutters.	8	18	9	-
14	A child loses his self-control in a classroom and his physical acting-out cannot be controlled by the teacher.	80	71	73	80

In the preceding table and in those which follow, a discrepancy of 25% was taken as significant. Two items appeared to show significant differences between the VT and the classroom teacher. They were:

1. A child is aggressive to his peers, defiant of the teacher, and antagonistic to adults generally.

5. A child steals and/or destroys school property.

In addition, one item came very close to significance between the VT and the principal:

6. A child fails to perform academically up to his known capacity.

The principal and the VT also had significantly different views about:

5. A child steals and/or destroys school property.

And there was considerable (20%) difference regarding:

2. A child is often absent from school without a sufficient reason.

The only item which indicated close agreement between the VT and the principal, while indicating strong disagreement with the classroom teacher was:

1. A child is aggressive to his peers, defiant of the teacher, and antagonistic to adults generally.

SUMMARY

There were only two problems which all personnel agreed should be referred to the VT as a first step. These were related to children who are either depressed or physically acting-out. However, if the acting-out was not a pattern but an exception in the child's behavior, none of the respondents felt strongly that the VT should be immediately consulted. In this case, only two-thirds of the principals, half the VTs and on-quarter of the diagnostician felt that referral to the VT was an appropriate first step. This may reflect a feeling that the VT is not the appropriate person to whom crisis situations should be referred, or it may reflect the lack of availability of VTs for such services.

There were four problems which few of the respondents felt should be referred to the VT as a first step. These related to intellectual dullness, poor verbal pronunciation, poor co-ordination, and poor personel cleanliness.

Dianosticians exhibited a high degree of agreement with VT responses, with disagreement on only two items.

No. 6. A child fails to perform academically up to his known capacity.

No. 8. A generally well-behaved child has a series of severe temper tantrums.

The item on underachievement is particularly interesting here, since more than half of the VT's see this as an appropriate area for involvement at the first step. One explanation for the discrepancy is that the first step could involve testing, the natural prerogative of the diagnostician. This explanation does not cover the item on temper tantrums, where the principal and the diagnostician showed a high degree of disagreement.

The list does reflect considerable agreement among respondents in ten of the items. However, it is interesting to note that only 71% of the teachers agreed that referral to the VT was an appropriate first step for any problem listed. Thus the trend of the responses consistantly shows the VT's feeling of greater responsibility in every area except word mispronounciation. This may question the support for the VT's diagnostic function.

This page includes the items where respondents were simply asked whether VTs actually do the following:

		PERCENT RESPONSES			
		VT	T	P	SD
1	Formulation of school policies with school officials (not teachers) regarding rules, regulations, curriculum and extra-curricular offerings.	2%	1%	5%	7%
2	Case conferences and meetings on a particular pupil and/or his family (including siblings) with a group of teachers.	37%	29%	19%	53%
3	Case conferences and meetings on a particular pupil and/or his family (including siblings) with a group of agency personnel.	32%	29%	23%	47%
4	Group Discussions with teachers regarding general classroom management.	8%	6%	9%	1%
5	Consultation with relevant persons in crisis situations regarding a particular student.	18%	76%	73%	60%

The major discrepency appears to involve Item 5, with high agreement among all three respondents and disagreement between this consensus and the VTs view of his or her own functioning.

Vts were not generally viewed as participating very often in conferences and consultations with others. It is notable, however, that in 3 of the 5 areas mentioned, at least 15% more of the diagnosticians saw the VT as participating in such situations than the VTs themselves said they did. Perhaps the school diagnosticians responses were influenced by what they thought the VT should be doing, and did not reflect what the VT actually did.

It is also remarkable that while less than 20% of the VTs said they intervened in crises situations, the other respondents thought that this was something the VT did. It is difficult to explain the fact that there is at least a 42% difference between the VTs and the other respondents regarding his participation in this area.

PERCENT OF RESPONSES ON WHAT ACTS VISITING TEACHERS FREQUENTLY CARRY OUT AND WHAT ACTS THEY SHOULD NORMALLY CARRY OUT

DO / SHOULD

PERCENT RESPONSES

		VT	T	P	SP
1	Change pupil values.	17 /	65 / 94	55 / 91	40 / 79
2	Change pupil's self-perception as a student.	79 /	94 / 94	82 / 86	60 / 93
3	Change pupil's role or actions as a family member.	42 /	65 / 94	41 / 95	27 / 80
4	Assist the pupil with daily schedule outside school.	13 /	24 / 59	18 / 64	13 / 60
5	Influence friendships of the pupil.	9 /	29 / 65	41 / 55	7 / 73
6	Help pupil change his attitude toward a teacher or situation.	72 /	94 / 94	86 / 86	67 / 100
7	Interprets school rules to pupil.	48 /	47 / 59	55 / 73	47 / 40
8	Assist pupil in understanding how to complete specific educational tasks successfully.	17 /	18 / 53	32 / 50	7 / 53
9	Assist pupil in identifying appropriate additional assistance.	45 /	35 / 88	41 / 91	27 / 100
10	Motivate pupil to seek additional assistance.	52 /	47 / 94	41 / 77	27 / 100
11	Help pupil establish contact with someone who can assist him.	41 /	29 / 88	45 / 91	40 / 93
12	Help pupil sustain relationship with other assisting person(s).	39 /	76 / 88	68 / 91	33 / 100
13	Help pupil apply assistance he is receiving from others to problematic areas.	27 /	59 / 76	64 / 91	33 / 93
14	Plan staged experiences for pupil to assist in transition from one environment to another.	21 /	12 / 47	27 / 77	7 / 53

NOTE: There were no "SHOULD" responses from visiting teachers, none having been requested from them.

PERCENT OF RESPONSES ON WHAT ACTS VISITING TEACHERS FREQUENTLY CARRY OUT AND WHAT ACTS THEY SHOULD NORMALLY CARRY OUT

		PERCENT RESPONSES			
	DO / SHOULD	VT	T	P	SP
15	Help teachers develop techniques for setting limits on pupil's classroom behavior.	57 /	18 / 71	55 / 86	53 / 80
16	Help teacher with techniques for developing better relationships with pupils.	59 /	24 / 76	55 / 86	47 / 87
17	Provide relevant information about pupils.	88 /	71 / 94	86 / 100	53 / 100
18	Obtains information about pupil's problematic behavior in classroom.	95 /	88 / 94	82 / 100	93 / 100
19	Relate recent behaviors to past behavior of pupils.	70 /	82 / 100	77 / 95	53 / 87
20	Point out positive aspects of a pupil's behavior in other situations.	83 /	76 / 100	73 / 100	67 / 93
21	Point out positive aspects of a pupil's behavior in the classroom.	75 /	53 / 94	55 / 91	87 / 93
22	Suggest different uses of rewards and punishments.	48 /	35 / 88	50 / 86	60 / 73
23	Interpret meaning of a pupil's behavior.	79 /	88 / 94	77 / 91	67 / 93
24	Seek information regarding learning methods from teacher to be utilized in helping pupil.	29 /	29 / 94	55 / 91	20 / 67
25	Assist teacher in planning appropriate educational tasks for pupils.	27 /	- / 82	36 / 68	20 / 33
26	Suggests ways the teacher can help to decrease pupil's dependence on you.	21 /	12 / 88	36 / 100	27 / 100
27	Suggest ways to support pupil's attempts to help himself.	82 /	41 / 88	59 / 100	67 / 93

Of the 27 functions listed on pages 16 and 17, there were 24 in which the teachers, principals and diagnosticians agreed that the function should be a more normal part of the VT's role than VT's indicated that it was. In 13 of the categories, all respondents showed at least 25% difference between their "do" responses and their "should" responses. These were:

Change pupil values.
Change pupil's role or actions as a family member.
Assist the pupil with daily schedule outside school.
Assist pupil in identifying appropriate additional assistance.
Motivate pupil to seek additional assistance.
Help pupil establish contact with someone who can assist him.
Plan staged experiences for pupil to assist in transition from one environment to another.
Help teachers develop techniques for setting limits on pupil's classroom behavior.
Help teacher with techniques for developing better relationships with pupils.
Point out positive aspects of a pupil's behavior in other situations.
Seek information regarding learning methods from teacher to be utilized in helping pupil.
Suggests ways the teacher can help to decrease pupil's dependence on you.
Suggest ways to support pupil's attempts to help himself.

This list included almost half of the total functions. Note that the school diagnosticians tended to be the ones who most often felt the function was one the VT should normally carry out, but least often felt he was doing it. They seemed to have the least favorable opinion of the VT's performance, while at the same time having the highest aspirations for him.

Regarding the "do" responses, teachers indicated in Items 25, 26, and 27 that VTs assisted them in planning appropriate educational tasks for their pupils. The indication by VTs that they were suggesting ways to support the pupil's attempts to help himself while teachers did not agree they were receiving this kind of assistance seems to be a serious inconsistency. For example, in Item 15 only 18% of the teachers indicated that VTs helped them develop techniques for setting limits on pupil's classroom behavior. In this area both "do" and "should" responses indicate very different views.

The teachers and the other personnel were interpreting the VTS purpose differently, and their view of the actual performance of the VT varied considerably. This confusion was not due to a lack of visibility of service, since these areas were interactional and required visibility.

There were only two functions which the teachers and principals were satisfied the VT was doing as much as he should. These were:

Changing the pupil's self-perception as a student.
Helping the pupil change his attitude toward a teacher or situation.

For both of these, the diagnosticians did not feel the function was as normal a part of the VT's work as it should be, since the difference between their "do" and "should" responses was 33%. We could conclude that in only 2 categories did the respondents indicate that the VT was performing up to the expectations which the teacher and principal had for him.

The school diagnostician felt that the VT should not be interpreting school rules to the pupils as much as they were doing. This was the only function for which the "should" response was lower than the "do" response, although the difference of 7% was not highly significant. About half the respondents in each category felt that this was something the VT normally does, but the teachers and principals disagreed with the diagnosticians. Fifty-nine per cent of the teachers and 73% of the principals stated that rule interpretation should be a normal part of the VT's work.

The wide discrepancies amongst the respondents indicates some need for the clarification of the VT's role to the other personnel in the school. It may be that their expectations for the VT are unrealistic in many areas. It is also possible, however, that the VT should re-orient himself to perform some of the functions that the others see as a normal part of his role. The general tone of these responses strongly points to greater service to the teacher with heavy focus on school related problems.

The following section, pages 18 to 25, consists of a summary of responses given to three essay questions by: Principals

Chief School Diagnosticians

Classroom Teachers

There is a section on VT's suggestions for improving the program as well.

ESSAY QUESTION ONE: WHAT DO YOU FEEL IS THE MOST DIFFICULT AND LEAST SATISFYING ASPECT OF VT WORK?

The following comments were made by personnel in all three categories (principals, school diagnosticians, and teachers):

1. Lack of co-operation from relevant persons and agencies was mentioned 12 times.

Lack of parental co-operation.

Getting the parents to accept the idea that their child needs this kind of help. Getting both parents to co-operate with VT.

Most difficult to convince parents of the particular problem and that something must be done about it. Least satisfying when contacts with Special Services have been made, and parents involved fail to keep appointment after a waiting period of 4 to 6 months.

Trying to help children whose parents are not able or not willing to co-operate with the teacher and child.

When the parents say they understand the problem but do nothing about the situation.

That of changing parental attitudes about their children and their relation to the school and society.

Influence parents (and perhaps teachers) to alter the child's environment.

Usually it takes a long period of time in which to effect a change in the child. Teachers want "immediate" change for the better. Also you must have the co-operation of the home in order to help the child. Without this, VT can do little.

Failure of parents to co-operate and follow through the suggestions which could help the child.

When the teachers are not willing to co-operate with the VT.

Lack of co-operation from some agencies, and procrastination as an art.

Many clients represent problems that require the aid and co-operation of outside professional help and such help is either unavailable or available only after long waiting periods.

2. Inadequate communication with relevant persons was mentioned 7 times.

Bringing understanding to the teachers, the home, and to the child about VT work. When rapport is good and results of work successful satisfaction is gained. When personality traits and methods of pupil interviews are not understood or accepted by the teacher or home, or other factors disturb communication, then difficulty and disatisfaction results.

I would like more time to discuss with her the students who need her help. Also more time is needed for her to meet with the teacher concerned.

It is quite difficult to find conference time outside of normal school hours.

One experiences a built-in self protective bias on the part of some visiting teachers and even more so with school social workers. It is ironical that one should do everything possible to improve standards and qualifications of VT's (by becoming school social workers or psychiatric social workers) and then use these improvements as a wall in establishing effective inter-personal and working relationships. There appears to be an abyss between educators (teachers) and VT's (and more pronounced with social workers).

Lack of consultation with supporting personnel.

Little time for periodic conferences involving VT, teacher and/or principal and parents. Very difficult for teacher to assist when just time limits his awareness of situations, etc. known to VT.

Finding time for proper communication with over-loaded classes, teachers with full schedules, poses a real problem. There is little time for proper follow-up and exchange of ideas.

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3. Lack of understanding of the role of the VT by other personnel was mentioned 4 times.

The most difficult aspect of VT work is getting the teachers to realize that a referral does not mean failure on their part. The classroom teacher needs to be aware of the help which the VT can give.

The name - they don't "visit" and they are not teachers. Why can't they be called what they are - school social workers?

Lack of understanding of VT's role by some principals and teachers.

Teachers need to be able to know visiting teachers better, can call on them early when needed.

Both the principals and school diagnosticians felt that the VT's job was made difficult and unsatisfying by the types of cases with which the VT deals.

I feel it would be quite frustrating to deal primarily with problem youngsters. Our load is quite high and so the only cases she receives are those with problems.

Working with extreme behavior problem children.

Coping with aggressive acting-out children who come from either inadequate or disinterested home situations which are basically unmodifiable.

Principals and teachers were concerned with lack of time, inadequate numbers of VTs, and inadequate working facilities. These were mentioned 23 times and some examples follow:

Our VT has too large a case load to handle. It should be cut by at least 50%.

The VT in our school is having to spread herself too thin in order to do the best job. A lower case load would help. Spending one day per week in my school of 750 is hardly enough.

I would say that the VT is not able to spend enough time in each building served.

We need more VTs to handle the case loads in our building.

We could use a lot more VT time. More time could profitably be spent in observation and in helping identify problems before they develop to a serious stage. If more time were available I would be willing to give the VT more latitude in my building.

The VT is in our school only 1 day a week.

Insufficient time to do casework properly.

We have three VTs serving 12 elementary schools. This makes far too large a case load to enable the VT to give all these children as much time and help as they need.

Not enough time in each building.

Too much reporting and record keeping.

ESSAY QUESTION TWO: WHAT INNOVATIONS DO YOU FEEL THE VT SERVICE IN YOUR BUILDING SHOULD INTRODUCE? (HOW WOULD YOU IMPROVE THE SERVICE?)

ESSAY QUESTION THREE: WHAT IS THE MAJOR REASON THAT YOU FEEL THAT THESE INNOVATIONS ARE NECESSARY?

1. One innovation suggested by all three kinds of personnel (and mentioned 20 times) was to increase VT service available. Some representative comments will be given here with the reasons for the innovation immediately following the suggestion.

I would like to have our VT handle about 3 times the number of children she is now able to handle. REASON: Many children need help who cannot see her because of heavy case load.

The VT should have time to confer with the classroom teacher at least once a month. There should be more than 1 VT. REASON: Too many children are passed by when they could get help. There are 12 of 26 children in my room who I could refer if the VT had time.

The VT has too many cases. His time is consumed with paper work. The case load should be kept to a reasonable limit so the child is seen once a week. REASON: Teachers are reluctant to refer children as they could not see any benefit to the child for a program very thinly spread.

I am very pleased with the service as it is but we need a VT more than 1 morning a week. REASON: Our school is in a district that has many ADC wards, only one parent, foster home children. They need someone who can be available at almost any time.

2. Another innovation that was a common theme with all three types of personnel had to do with allowing more time to consult and work co-operatively with school personnel. This was mentioned 19 times and some examples follow:

The child's classroom teacher should be consulted at intervals. REASON: The VT became more interested in filling out case studies than in giving the teacher any real help.

I feel the VT should observe the child in his room situation throughout the year. REASON: This would allow a great deal more co-operation with classroom teachers.

Group meetings of teachers to explain more fully the work of the VT and what kind of child most warrants her kind of service. REASON: So many new teachers on the staff each year who haven't had college training in regard to VT service.

Perhaps at the beginning of the year, the VT should offer some sort of workshop for new teachers to the school system and the building. Frequent conferences with the staff several times yearly to keep teachers informed on the latest in VT developments. REASON: Would give the teacher background, historical and procedural information. It should also make the teacher - VT relationship smoother.

Staffing of cases for demonstration of many facets of involvement of VT. REASON: To foster better understanding of VT role.

Have an occasional discussion of a case, with general hints and specific suggestions to the teacher as to proper procedures in the event a like problem should present itself in a classroom. REASON: To develop in the teacher a more sympathetic understanding of any child referred to the VT.

More conference time. Frequent attendance at faculty meetings might help and meetings with teachers of children from 1 family. REASON: Understanding of each others' roles has been inadequate to the point of decreasing the effectiveness of the VT to both teacher and pupil. The communication chain is in need of repair.

More follow-up with classroom teacher. REASON: Teacher should be aware of any progress. Working together, the teacher and VT can share techniques which help the child most.

Meet with all the staff early in the year to get acquainted. Expalin the kinds of behavior which should be referred to VT. REASON: Many teachers do not know the VT and hesitate to make referrals.

More time for consultation with teachers. REASON: Better results, perhaps better communication among concerned parties.

Meet with teachers. Have a set time in each building to discuss children with teachers. REASON: Teachers need suggestions in working with children with problems.

Group meetings with parents of children with similar problems. REASON: Reach more people. Parents would gain from experiences of others.

More opportunities should be provided for interviews with teachers. Conferences with parents, principal, teacher and VT. REASON: Children should never be allowed to lose sight of their responsibility in returning to a regular classroom situation. Naturally a VT can establish ideal rapport with one child at a time, in a relaxed atmosphere, giving him a chance to relieve frustrations, etc. The same disruptive youngster in a crowded classroom can sap a teacher's patience and channel attention needed for instructional purposes. The image of the classroom teacher must not be damaged because of individualized attention of a VT. It might also be helpful for a VT to take over a classroom situation now and then, and note problems which arise.

The psychologist and teachers had suggestions for changing the working conditions of the VT.

A move which would place the VT within the Special Education office rather than the Pupil Personnel office. REASON: It would stop duplication of effort and allow for greater communication between diagnostician and VT.

I would put the services of a VT in each school and also have a special room which would be used only by the VT. REASON: This would allow a closer relationship between the VT and teacher. I feel this is very necessary to allow an even and relaxed discussion between the VT and the classroom teacher.

The principals and teachers felt there should be changes in the type of work the VT does:

I would like to see the VT pay more attention to pre-schoolers and kindergarten children. REASON: Since most problems exist when the child first enters school, the VT's assistance should be offered at the time when both parents and child are most receptive.

I would like to see the VT have more time for less serious short term problems. REASON: I feel the major difficulties could be prevented if the minor ones were met in the early stages.

New methods of working with the "hardened" emotionally disturbed child. REASON: Often no one is really working with the "hardened" types.

Despite the great many innovations suggested, there were comments made relating satisfaction with the VT service as it existed:

She is wonderful as she is.

Very satisfactory as is.

With new personnel, regular contact with the child has been maintained.

Our VT service is very good.

VT'S GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING VISITING TEACHER PROGRAM

Number of times suggested	
	Concerning Training
7	More active and intensive recruitment program for visiting teaching.
8	Better training and screening of visiting teachers.
4	Better teacher training regarding social psychology pertaining to children.
27	More emphasis on Masters in Social Work; less emphasis on Education requirements.
3	More emphasis on Education in Visiting Teacher Program.
16	Increased state supervision and consultation of counseling and guidance services.
9	More (and better) inservice training of visiting teachers.
7	More financial support for training of social workers.
	Concerning Professional Role
6	Change name.
4	Sense of professional identity among social workers.
15	More research and evaluation regarding school social work so as to improve it.
33	Better interpretation and explanation of visiting teacher's role to administrators, policy makers, teachers and community.
10	More visiting teacher involvement in school programming and activities.
6	Use of more methods than casework.
6	More concentration on parental problems.
10	More cooperation and collaboration between teachers and visiting teachers.
5	More cooperation and collaboration between schools and special services.

Number	Concerning Working Conditions
48	More consultant services (psychological, psychiatric).
5	More preventive work (pre-kindergarten, early referrals).
8	More active participation in case selection.
3	More research.
84	More visiting teachers.
21	Smaller caseloads.
26	Less student enrollment than 2500 per visiting teacher.
20	Fewer schools.
5	Better recording procedures.
39	Better office facilities (space, privacy, equipment).
6	More (and better) social agencies for referral.
7	Higher wages.
21	Hire casework supervisors.
8	More (and better) visiting teacher seminars and workshops.
14	Better local and regional administration.